

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 /066 W  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4378  
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK  
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM  
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI  
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 4123

USCINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, NO  
SUBJECT: SEPTEMBER 12 ELECTIONS - FINAL WEEKEND

REF: (A) OSLO 3918 (B) OSLO 4072

SUMMARY: ON THE EVE OF THE ELECTION THE CONTENDERS REMAIN DEADLOCKED. ALMOST ALL POLLS PREDICT A TIGHT RACE, WITH SOME POLLS PREDICTING A LABOR VICTORY AND OTHERS NON-SOCIALIST WIN. THE CLOSE NOTE IS EXPECTED TO LEAD, IN TURN, TO INTENSIVE JOCKEYING FOR POSITION IN THE THREE WEEK PERIOD BETWEEN THE ELECTION AND THE OPENING OF THE STORTING. NEITHER A SOCIALIST VICTORY (NORDLI) OR A NON-SOCIALIST WIN (PROBABLY KORVALD AS P.M.) WOULD LEAD TO ANY CHANGES IN NORWAY'S BASIC FOREIGN POLICIES. END SUMMARY.

1. LESS THAN 72 HOURS BEFORE VOTING BEGINS ON SEPTEMBER 12, THE MAIN CONTENDERS IN THE NORWEGIAN  
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PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS REMAIN IN AN APPARENT DEADLOCK. LATE POLLS GIVE AN EDGE, IN SOME INSTANCES, TO THE NON-SOCIALISTS, AND IN OTHERS TO THE SOCIALISTS.

2. TO DATE NONE OF THE PARTIES HAS PUT FORWARD AN ISSUE OR COMPLEX OF ISSUES CAPABLE OF MOVING LARGE NUMBERS OF VOTERS FROM ONE LIST TO ANOTHER. THE

ECONOMIC ISSUE, FLOATED BY THE INCUMBENT LABOR PARTY (REFTEL A), COMMANDED A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF ATTENTION BUT, DESPITE THE TRADITIONAL HABIT OF NORWEGIANS TO VOTE LABOR WHEN THEIR POCKETBOOKS ARE ADVERSELY AFFECTED, LABOR HAS NOT REGISTERED ANY PERCEPTABLE GAINS. THIS MAY REFLECT THE FACT THAT MOST OF THE POOR ECONOMIC NEWS CONCERNED FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND DID NOT IMMEDIATELY IMPACT ON TODAY'S HIGH EMPLOYMENT AND GENERAL PROSPERITY. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THE DOUR ECONOMIC FORECASTS, DESPITE BEING ATTRIBUTED TO FORCES BEYOND NORWAY'S BORDERS, MAY HAVE WORKED AGAINST LABOR TO SOME EXTENT BY BRINGING INTO QUESTION THEIR SKILL IN THE HANDLING OF THE ECONOMY IN RECENT YEARS.

3. THE ELECTION TACTICS OF THE LEFT SOCIALIST PARTY (SV), WHOSE 16 SEATS HAVE ALLOWED LABOR (62 SEATS) TO RULE SINCE 1973, DO NOT APPEAR TO HAVE HELPED THE LEFTIST PARTY, WHICH, HOWEVER, RETAINS 5 TO 6 PERCENT STANDING IN THE POLLS. THEIR DISCLOSURE OF GON CLASSIFIED MATERIAL AND THEIR ACCUSATIONS (QUICKLY AND DEFINITELY REFUTED BY GON OFFICIALS) OF CIA PERSONNEL MANNING LISTENING STATIONS IN NORWAY, GENERATED A NUMBER OF ANGRY EDITORIALS REGARDING THE PARTY'S LACK OF RESPONSIBILITY AND ITS ULTIMATE AIMS REGARDING NORWEGIAN INSTITUTIONS AND SECURITY. THE WIDELY DEPLORED SV ELECTION TACTICS MAY ALSO HAVE HURT THE LABOR PARTY WHICH, IN THE ABSENCE OF A CLEAR MAJORITY OF 78 SEATS, MIGHT BE EXPECTED ONCE AGAIN TO SEEK CONFIDENTIAL

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SV SUPPORT TO FORM A GOVERNMENT.

4. THE LARGEST PROBLEM FOR THE LABOR PARTY REMAINS THE WIDESPREAD NORWEGIAN FEELING THAT THERE IS SIMPLY TOO MUCH GOVERNMENT IN THE CITIZEN'S DAILY LIFE AND THE COMMITANT FEELING THAT A CHANGE OF REGIME MIGHT STAY OR SLOW THE EXPANSION OF SUCH GOVERNMENT REGULATION AND ACTIVITY.

5. THE SVALBARD/USSR QUESTION, WHICH COMMANDED HEAVY ATTENTION TO THE SEPTEMBER 7-8 PRESS, WAS ALMOST ENTIRELY ABSENT FROM THE SEPTEMBER 9 PRESS. IT COULD, HOWEVER, BE RAISED ANEW IN THE FINAL WEEKEND OF CAMPAIGNING.

6. THE EXPECTED CLOSENESS OF THE VOTE MAKES IT PROBABLE THAT THERE WILL BE INTENSIVE MANEUVERING BETWEEN THE SEPTEMBER 12 VOTING AND THE EARLY OCTOBER OPENING OF THE STORTING. IN THE EVENT THE PARTY IN POWER IS DEFEATED, PROCEDURES CALL FOR THE PM TO RESIGN. THE OUTGOING CABINET THEN ACTS AS A CARETAKER GOVERNMENT UNTIL THE NEW STORTING CONVENES IN EARLY OCTOBER. IN THE EVENT THE INCUMBENTS WIN, HOWEVER, THE CABINET REMAINS IN

PLACE. ACCORDINGLY, THERE ARE NUMEROUS SCENARIOS FOR THE SEPTEMBER 12-OCTOBER 4 PERIOD.

7. IN THE EVENT OF A LABOR VICTORY, THE CABINET REMAINS IN PLACE WITH NO RESIGNATIONS. IF NO GROUP HAS A CLEAR MAJORITY, LABOR (AS THE LARGEST SINGLE PARTY) WILL BE ASKED TO FORM A GOVERNMENT. LABOR COULD, UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, FORM A COALITION WITH ONE OR MORE OF THE SMALLER PARTIES, SEEKING TO LINE UP THE 78 SEATS NEEDED FOR A MAJORITY OR SEEK TO RULE AS A MINORITY GOVERNMENT.

8. IN THE EVENT OF A CLEAR CUT NON-SOCIALIST VICTORY, NORDLI WOULD DEMUR WHEN ASKED, AS LEADER OF THE LARGEST PARTY, TO FORM A GOVERNMENT, AND THE THREE NON-SOCIALIST  
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PARTIES WOULD UNDERTAKE THE TASK. THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE THREE MAIN OPPOSITION PARTIES TO DATE, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN FAR FROM UNIFORM, AND THE JOCKEYING AMONG THE THREE FOR CABINET POSTS WOULD BEGIN IN EARNEST AFTER THE RETURNS ARE IN AND THE RELATIVE PARLIAMENTARY STRENGTHS OF THE THREE ARE CLEARLY DEFINED. OF THE NON-SOCIALIST LEADERS, ONLY THE PM CANDIDATE, LARS KORVALD, NOW APPEARS CERTAIN OF A POST IN A NON-SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT.

9. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S.: NONE OF THE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES (LABOR, LABOR IN COALITION, LABOR WITH NON-PARTICIPATING SUPPORT FROM A MINOR PARTY AS AT PRESENT, OR NON-SOCIALIST) WOULD PRESENT THE U.S. WITH ANY SERIOUS IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS IN ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH NORWAY. THE LABOR PARTY REMAINS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO NORWAY'S BASIC WESTERN ALIGNMENT. THE NON-SOCIALISTS ARE ALSO FIRMLY PRO-NATO AND PRO-WESTERN.

10. OUTLOOK: WE EXPECT A CLOSE ELECTION AND, IN ALMOST ANY FORESEEABLE OUTCOME, HEAVY JOCKEYING FOR POSITION IN THE THREE WEEKS LEADING UP TO THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT, FOLLOWED BY A GON WITH FAMILIAR FACES, EITHER NORDLI OR THE NON-SOCIALIST CANDIDATE KORVALD AT THE HEAD, AND CONTINUATION OF CURRENT FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICIES.  
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